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The United States and the Overthrow of Sukarno, 1965–1967

Peter Dale Scott

IN THIS SHORT PAPER on a huge and vexed subject, I discuss the U.S. involvement in the bloody overthrow of Indonesia's President Sukarno, 1965–67. The whole story of that ill-understood period would transcend even the fullest possible written analysis. Much of what happened can never be documented; and of the documentation that survives, much is both controversial and unverifiable. The slaughter of Sukarno's left-wing allies was a product of widespread paranoia as well as of conspiratorial policy, and represents a tragedy beyond the intentions of any single group or coalition. Nor is it suggested that in 1965 the only provocations and violence came from the right-wing Indonesian military, their contacts in the United States, or (also important, but barely touched on here) their mutual contacts in British, German and Japanese intelligence.

And yet, after all this has been said, the complex and ambiguous story of the Indonesian bloodbath is also in essence simpler and easier to believe than the public version inspired by President Suharto and U.S. government sources. Their problematic claim is that in the so-called Gestapu (Gerakan September Tigahpuluh) coup attempt of September 30, 1965 (when six senior army generals were murdered), the left attacked the right, leading to a restoration of power, and punitive purge of the left, by the center.¹ This article argues instead that, by inducing, or at a minimum helping to induce, the Gestapu "coup," the right in the Indonesian Army eliminated its rivals at the army's center, thus paving the way to a long-planned elimination of the civilian left, and eventually

¹ The difficulties of this analysis, based chiefly on the so-called "evidence" presented at the Mahmilub trials, will be obvious to anyone who has tried to reconcile the conflicting accounts of Gestapu in, e.g., the official Suharto account by Nugroho Notokusanto and Ismail Saleh, and the somewhat less fanciful CIA study of 1968, both referred to later. I shall draw only on those parts of the Mahmilub evidence which limit or discredit their anti-PKI thesis. For interpretation of the Mahmilub data, cf. especially Coen Holtzappel, "The 30 September Movement," *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, IX, 2 (1979), pp. 216–40. The case for general skepticism is argued by Rex Mortimer, *Indonesian Communism Under Sukarno* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1974), pp. 421-3; and, more forcefully, by Julie Southwood and Patrick Flanagan, *Indonesia: Law, Propaganda, and Terror* (London: Zed Press, 1983), pp. 126–34.

to the establishment of a military dictatorship.² Gestapu, in other words, was only the first phase of a three-phase right-wing coup—one which had been both publicly encouraged and secretly assisted by U.S. spokesmen and officials.³

Before turning to U.S. involvement in what the CIA itself has called “one of the worst mass murders of the twentieth century,”⁴ let us recall what actually led up to it. According to the Australian scholar Harold Crouch, by 1965 the Indonesian Army General Staff was split into two camps. At the center were the general staff officers appointed with, and loyal to, the army commander General Yani, who in turn was reluctant to challenge President Sukarno’s policy of national unity in alliance with the Indonesian Communist party, or PKI. The second group, including the right-wing generals Nasution and Suharto, comprised those opposed to Yani and his Sukarnoist policies.⁵ All of these generals were anti-PKI, but by 1965 the divisive issue was Sukarno.

The simple (yet untold) story of Sukarno’s overthrow is that in the fall of 1965 Yani and his inner circle of generals were murdered, paving the way for a seizure of power by right-wing anti-Yani forces allied to Suharto. The key to this was the so-called Gestapu coup attempt which, in the name of supporting Sukarno, in fact targeted very precisely the leading members of the army’s most loyal faction, the Yani group.⁶ An army unity meeting in January 1965, between “Yani’s inner circle” and those (including Suharto) who “had grievances of one sort or another

² At his long-delayed trial in 1978, Gestapu plotter Latief confirmed earlier revelations that he had visited his old commander Suharto on the eve of the Gestapu kidnappings. He claimed that he raised with Suharto the existence of an alleged right-wing “Council of Generals” plotting to seize power, and informed him “of a movement which was intended to thwart the plan of the generals’ council for a coup d’état” (Anon., “The Latief Case: Suharto’s Involvement Revealed,” *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, IX, 2 [1979], pp. 248–50). For a more comprehensive view of Suharto’s involvement in Gestapu, cf. especially W.F. Wertheim, “Whose Plot? New Light on the 1965 Events,” *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, IX, 2 (1979), pp. 197–215; Holtzappel, “The 30 September,” in contrast, points more particularly to intelligence officers close to the banned Murba party of Chaerul Saleh and Adam Malik: cf. fn. 104.

³ The three phases are: (1) “Gestapu,” the induced left-wing “coup”; (2) “KAP-Gestapu,” or the anti-Gestapu “response,” massacring the PKI; (3) the progressive erosion of Sukarno’s remaining power. This paper will chiefly discuss Gestapu/KAP-Gestapu, the first two phases. To call the first phase by itself a “coup” is in my view an abuse of terminology: there is no real evidence that in this phase political power changed hands or that this was the intention.

⁴ U.S., Central Intelligence Agency, *Research Study: Indonesia—The Coup that Backfired*, 1968 (cited hereafter as CIA Study), p. 71n.

⁵ Harold Crouch, *The Army and Politics in Indonesia* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1978), pp. 79–81.

⁶ In addition, one of the two Gestapu victims in Central Java (Colonel Katamsjo) was the only non-PKI official of rank to attend the PKI’s nineteenth anniversary celebration in Jogjakarta in May 1964: Mortimer, *Indonesian Communism*, p. 432. Ironically, the belated “discovery” of his corpse was used to trigger off the purge of his PKI contacts.

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against Yani,” lined up the victims of September 30 against those who came to power after their murder.⁷

Not one anti-Sukarno general was targeted by Gestapu, with the obvious exception of General Nasution.⁸ But by 1961 the CIA operatives had become disillusioned with Nasution as a reliable asset, because of his “consistent record of yielding to Sukarno on several major counts.”⁹ Relations between Suharto and Nasution were also cool, since Nasution, after investigating Suharto on corruption charges in 1959, had transferred him from his command.¹⁰

The duplicitous distortions of reality, first by Lt. Colonel Untung’s statements for Gestapu, and then by Suharto in “putting down” Gestapu, are mutually supporting lies.¹¹ Untung, on October 1, announced ambiguously that Sukarno was under Gestapu’s “protection” (he was not); also, that a CIA-backed Council of Generals had planned a coup for before October 5, and had for this purpose brought “troops from East, Central, and West Java” to Jakarta.¹² Troops from these areas had indeed been brought to Jakarta for an Armed Forces Day parade on October 5th. Untung did not mention, however, that “he himself had been involved in the planning for the Armed Forces Day parade and in selecting the units to participate in it;”¹³ nor that these units (which included his own former battalion, the 454th) supplied most of the allies for his new battalion’s Gestapu activities in Jakarta.

Suharto’s first two broadcasts reaffirmed the army’s constant loyalty to “Bung Karno the Great Leader,” and also blamed the deaths of the six

⁷ Four of the six pro-Yani representatives in January were killed along with Yani on October 1. Of the five anti-Yani representatives in January, we shall see that at least three were prominent in “putting down” Gestapu and completing the elimination of the Yani-Sukarno loyalists (the three were Suharto, Basuki Rachmat, and Sudirman of SESKOAD, the Indonesian Army Staff and Command School): Crouch, *The Army*, p. 81n.

⁸ While Nasution’s daughter and aide were murdered, he was able to escape without serious injury, and support the ensuing purge.

⁹ *Indonesia*, 22 (October 1976), p. 165 (CIA Memorandum of 22 March 1961 from Richard M. Bissell, Attachment B). By 1965 this disillusionment was heightened by Nasution’s deep opposition to the U.S. involvement in Vietnam.

¹⁰ Crouch, *The Army*, p. 40; Brian May, *The Indonesian Tragedy* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), pp. 221–2.

¹¹ I shall assume for this condensed argument that Untung was the author, or at least approved, of the statements issued in his name. Scholars who see Untung as a dupe of Gestapu’s controllers note that Untung was nowhere near the radio station broadcasting in his name, and that he appears to have had little or no influence over the task force which occupied it (under Captain Suradi of the intelligence service of Colonel Latief’s Brigade): Holtzappel, pp. 218, 231–2, 236–7. I have no reason to contradict those careful analysts of Gestapu—such as Wertheim, “Whose Plot?” p. 212, and Holtzappel, “The 30 September,” p. 231—who conclude that Untung personally was sincere, and manipulated by other *dalangs* such as Sjam.

¹² Broadcast of 7:15 a.m. October 1; *Indonesia* 1 (April 1966), p. 134; Ulf Sundhussen, *The Road to Power: Indonesian Military Politics, 1945–1967* (Kuala Lumpur and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 196.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 201.

generals on PKI youth and women, plus “elements of the Air Force”—on no other evidence than the site of the well where the corpses were found.¹⁴ At this time he knew very well that the killings had in fact been carried out by the very army elements Untung referred to, elements under Suharto’s own command.¹⁵

Thus, whatever the motivation of individuals such as Untung in the Gestapu putsch, Gestapu as such was duplicitous. Both its rhetoric and above all its actions were not simply inept; they were carefully designed to prepare for Suharto’s equally duplicitous response. For example, Gestapu’s decision to guard all sides of the downtown Merdeka Square in Jakarta, except that on which Suharto’s KOSTRAD [Army Strategic Reserve Command] headquarters were situated, is consistent with Gestapu’s decision to target the only army generals who might have challenged Suharto’s assumption of power. Again, Gestapu’s announced transfer of power to a totally fictitious “Revolutionary Council,” from which Sukarno had been excluded, allowed Suharto in turn to masquerade as Sukarno’s defender while in fact preventing him from resuming control. More importantly, Gestapu’s gratuitous murder of the generals near the air force base where PKI youth had been trained allowed Suharto, in a Goebbels-like manoeuvre, to transfer the blame for the killings from the troops under his own command (whom he knew had carried out the kidnappings) to air force and PKI personnel who were ignorant of them.¹⁶

From pro-Suharto sources—notably the CIA study of Gestapu published in 1968—we learn how few troops were involved in the alleged Gestapu rebellion, and, more importantly, that in Jakarta as in Central Java the same battalions that supplied the “rebellious” companies were also used to “put the rebellion down.” Two thirds of one paratroop brigade (which Suharto had inspected the previous day) plus one

¹⁴ Broadcasts of October 1 and 4, 1965; *Indonesia* 1 (April 1966), pp. 158–9.

¹⁵ CIA Study, p. 2; O.G. Roeder, *The Smiling General: President Soeharto of Indonesia* (Jakarta: Gunung Agung, 1970), p. 12, quoting Suharto himself: “On my way to KOSTRAD HQ [Suharto’s HQ] I passed soldiers in green berets who were placed under KOSTRAD command but who did not salute me.”

¹⁶ Anderson and McVey concluded that Sukarno, Air Force Chief Omar Dhani, PKI Chairman Aidit (the three principal political targets of Suharto’s anti-Gestapu “response”) were rounded up by the Gestapu plotters in the middle of the night, and taken to Halim air force base, about one mile from the well at Lubang Buaja where the generals’ corpses were discovered. In 1966 they surmised that this was “to seal the conspirators’ control of the bases,” and to persuade Sukarno “to go along with” the conspirators’ plans (Benedict Anderson and Ruth McVey, *A Preliminary Analysis of the October 1, 1965, Coup in Indonesia* [Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1971], pp. 19–21). An alternative hypothesis of course is that Gestapu, by bringing these men together against their will, created the semblance of a PKI-air force-Sukarno conspiracy which would later be exploited by Suharto. Sukarno’s presence at Halim “was later to provide Sukarno’s critics with some of their handiest ammunition” (John Hughes, *The End of Sukarno* [London: Angus and Robertson, 1978], p. 54).

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company and one platoon constituted the whole of Gestapu forces in Jakarta; all but one of these units were commanded by present or former Diponegoro Division officers close to Suharto; and the last was under an officer who obeyed Suharto's close political ally, Basuki Rachmat.¹⁷

Two of these companies, from the 454th and 530th battalions, were elite raiders, and from 1962 these units had been among the main Indonesian recipients of U.S. assistance.¹⁸ This fact, which in itself proves nothing, increases our curiosity about the many Gestapu leaders who had been U.S.-trained. The Gestapu leader in Central Java, Saherman, had returned from training at Fort Leavenworth and Okinawa, shortly before meeting with Untung and Major Sukirno of the 454th Battalion in mid-August 1965.¹⁹ As Ruth McVey has observed, Saherman's acceptance for training at Fort Leavenworth "would mean that he had passed review by CIA observers."²⁰

Thus there is continuity between the achievements of both Gestapu and the response to it by Suharto, who in the name of defending Sukarno and attacking Gestapu continued its task of eliminating the pro-Yani members of the Army General Staff, along with such other residual elements of support for first Yani and then Sukarno as remained.²¹

The biggest part of this task was of course the elimination of the PKI and its supporters, in a bloodbath which, as some Suharto allies now

¹⁷ CIA Study, p. 2; cf. p. 65: "At the height of the coup . . . the troops of the rebels [in Central Java] were estimated to have the strength of only one battalion; during the next two days, these forces gradually melted away."

¹⁸ Rudolf Mrázek, *The United States and the Indonesian Military, 1945–1966* (Prague: Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, 1978), vol. II, p. 172. These battalions, comprising the bulk of the 3rd Paratroop Brigade, also supplied the bulk of the troops used to put down Gestapu in Jakarta. The subordination of these two factions in this supposed civil war to a single close command structure under Suharto is cited to explain how Suharto was able to restore order in the city without gunfire. Meanwhile out at the Halim air force base an alleged gun battle between the 454th (Green Beret) and RPKAD (Red Beret) paratroops went off "without the loss of a single man" (CIA Study, p. 60). In Central Java, also, power "changed hands silently and peacefully," with "an astonishing lack of violence" (CIA Study, p. 66).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 60n; Arthur J. Dommen, "The Attempted Coup in Indonesia," *China Quarterly*, January–March 1966, p. 147. The first "get-acquainted" meeting of the Gestapu plotters is placed in the Indonesian chronology of events from "sometimes before August 17, 1965"; cf. Nugroho Notokusanto and Ismail Saleh, *The Coup Attempt of the "September 30 Movement" in Indonesia* (Jakarta: [Pembimbing Masa, 1968], p. 13); in the CIA Study, this meeting is dated September 6 (p. 112). Neither account allows more than a few weeks to plot a coup in the world's fifth most populous country.

²⁰ Mortimer, *Indonesian Communism*, p. 429.

²¹ Of the six General Staff officers appointed along with Yani, three (Suprpto, D.I. Pandjaitan, and S. Parman) were murdered. Of the three survivors, two (Mursjid and Pranoto) were removed by Suharto in the next eight months. The last member of Yani's staff, Djamin Gintings, was used by Suharto during the establishment of the New Order, and ignored thereafter.

concede, may have taken more than a half-million lives. These three events—Gestapu, Suharto's response, and the bloodbath—have nearly always been presented in this country as separately motivated: Gestapu being described as a plot by leftists, and the bloodbath as for the most part an irrational act of popular frenzy.

U.S. officials, journalists and scholars, some with rather prominent CIA connections, are perhaps principally responsible for the myth that the bloodbath was a spontaneous, popular revulsion to what U.S. Ambassador Jones later called PKI "carnage."²² Although the PKI certainly contributed its share to the political hysteria of 1965, Crouch has shown that subsequent claims of a PKI terror campaign were grossly exaggerated.²³ In fact systematic killing occurred under army instigation in staggered stages, the worst occurring as Colonel Sarwo Edhie's RPKAD [Army Paracommando Regiment] moved from Jakarta to Central and East Java, and finally to Bali.²⁴ Civilians involved in the massacre were either recruited and trained by the army on the spot, or were drawn from groups (such as the army- and CIA-sponsored SOKSI trade unions [Central Organization of Indonesian Socialist Employees], and allied student organizations) which had collaborated for years with the army on political matters. It is clear from Sundhaussen's account that in most of the first areas of organized massacre (North Sumatra, Aceh, Cirebon, the whole of Central and East Java), there were local army commanders with especially strong and proven anti-PKI sentiments. Many of these had for years cooperated with civilians, through so-called "civic action" programs sponsored by the United States, in operations directed against the PKI and sometimes Sukarno. Thus one can legitimately suspect conspiracy in the fact that anti-PKI "civilian responses" began on October 1, when the army began handing out arms to Muslim students and unionists, before there was any publicly available evidence linking Gestapu to the PKI.²⁵

Even Sundhaussen, who downplays the army's role in arming and inciting the civilian murder bands, concludes that, whatever the strength of popular anti-PKI hatred and fear, "without the Army's anti-PKI propaganda the massacre might not have happened."²⁶ The present article goes further and argues that Gestapu, Suharto's response, and

²² Howard Palfrey Jones, *Indonesia: The Possible Dream* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1971), p. 391; cf. Arnold Brackman, *The Communist Collapse in Indonesia* (New York: Norton, 1969), pp. 118–9.

²³ Crouch, *The Army*, p. 150n.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 140–53; for the disputed case of Bali, even Robert Shaplen, a journalist close to U.S. official sources, concedes that "The Army began it" (*Time Out of Hand* [New York: Harper and Row, 1969], p. 125). The slaughter in East Java "also really got started when the RPKAD arrived, not just Central Java and Bali" (letter from Benedict Anderson).

²⁵ Sundhaussen, *The Road*, pp. 171, 178–9, 210, 228; Donald Hindley, "Alirans and the Fall of the Older Order," *Indonesia*, 25 (April 1970), pp. 40–41.

²⁶ Sundhaussen, *The Road*, p. 219.

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the bloodbath were part of a single coherent scenario for a military takeover, a scenario which was again followed closely in Chile in the years 1970–73 (and to some extent in Cambodia in 1970).

Suharto, of course, would be a principal conspirator in this scenario: his duplicitous role of posing as a defender of the constitutional status quo, while in fact moving deliberately to overthrow it, is analogous to that of General Pinochet in Chile. But a more direct role in organizing the bloodbath was played by civilians and officers close to the cadres of the CIA's failed rebellion of 1958, now working in so-called "civic action" programs funded and trained by the United States. Necessary ingredients of the scenario had to be, and clearly were, supplied by other nations in support of Suharto. Many such countries appear to have played such a supporting role: Japan, Britain, Germany,²⁷ possibly Australia. But I wish to focus on the encouragement and support for military "Putschism" and mass murder which came from the U.S., from the CIA, the military, RAND, the Ford Foundation, and individuals.²⁸

THE UNITED STATES AND THE INDONESIAN ARMY'S "MISSION"

It seems clear that from as early as 1953 the U.S. was interested in helping to foment the regional crisis in Indonesia, usually recognized as the "immediate cause" that induced Sukarno, on March 14, 1957, to proclaim martial law, and bring "the officer corps legitimately into politics."²⁹

By 1953 (if not earlier) the U.S. National Security Council had already adopted one of a series of policy documents calling for "appropriate action, in collaboration with other friendly countries, to prevent permanent communist control" of Indonesia.³⁰ Already NSC 171/1 of that year envisaged military training as a means of increasing U.S. influence, even though the CIA's primary efforts were directed towards right-wing political parties ("moderates . . . on the right," as NSC 171 called them): notably the Masjumi Muslim and the PSI "Socialist"

²⁷ "In 1965 it [the BND, or intelligence service of the Federal Republic of Germany] assisted Indonesia's military secret service to suppress a left-wing *Putsch* in Djakarta, delivering sub-machine guns, radio equipment and money to the value of 300,000 marks" (Heinz Höhne and Hermann Zolling, *The General Was a Spy* [New York: Bantam, 1972], p. xxxiii).

²⁸ We should not be misled by the CIA's support of the 1958 rebellion into assuming that all U.S. Government plotting against Sukarno and the PKI must have been CIA-based (cf. fn. 122).

²⁹ Daniel Lev, *The Transition to Guided Democracy: Indonesian Politics, 1957–1959* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1966), p. 12. For John Foster Dulles' hostility to Indonesian unity in 1953, cf. Leonard Mosley, *Dulles* (New York: The Dial Press/James Wade, 1978), p. 437.

³⁰ *Declassified Documents Quarterly Catalogue* (Woodbridge, Connecticut: Research Publications, 1982), 001191.

parties. The millions of dollars which the CIA poured into the Masjumi and the PSI in the mid-1950s were a factor influencing the events of 1965, when a former PSI member—Sjam—was the alleged mastermind of Gestapu,³¹ and PSI-leaning officers—notably Suwanto and Sarwo Edhie—were prominent in planning and carrying out the anti-PKI response to Gestapu.³²

In 1957–58, the CIA infiltrated arms and personnel in support of the regional rebellions against Sukarno. These operations were nominally covert, even though an American plane and pilot were captured, and the CIA efforts were accompanied by an offshore task force of the U.S. Seventh Fleet.³³ In 1975 a Senate Select Committee studying the CIA discovered what it called “some evidence of CIA involvement in plans to assassinate President Sukarno”; but, after an initial investigation of the November 1957 assassination attempt in the Cikini district of Jakarta, the committee did not pursue the matter.³⁴

On August 1, 1958, after the failure of the CIA-sponsored PRRI-Permesta regional rebellions against Sukarno, the U.S. began an upgraded military assistance program to Indonesia in the order of twenty million dollars a year.³⁵ A U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff memo of 1958 makes it clear this aid was given to the Indonesian Army (“the only non-Communist force . . . with the capability of obstructing the . . . PKI”) as “encouragement” to Nasution to “carry out his ‘plan’ for the control of Communism.”³⁶

The JCS had no need to spell out Nasution’s “plan,” to which other

³¹ As the head of the PKI’s secret Special Bureau, responsible only to Aidit, Sjam by his own testimony provided leadership to the “progressive officers” of Gestapu. The issue of PKI involvement in Gestapu thus rests on the question of whether Sjam was manipulating the Gestapu leadership on behalf of the PKI, or the PKI leadership on behalf of the army. There seems to be no disagreement that Sjam was (according to the CIA Study, p. 107) a longtime “double agent” and professed “informer for the Djakarta Military Command.” Wertheim (p. 203) notes that in the 1950s Sjam “was a cadre of the PSI,” and “had also been in touch with Lt. Col. Suharto, today’s President, who often came to stay in his house in Jogja.” This might help explain why in the 1970s, after having been sentenced to death, Sjam and his co-conspirator Supeno were reportedly “allowed out [of prison] from time to time and wrote reports for the army on the political situation” (May, *The Indonesian*) p. 114). Additionally, the “Sjam” who actually testified and was convicted, after being “captured” on March 9, 1967, was the third individual to be identified by the army as the “Sjam” of whom Untung had spoken: *Declassified Documents Retrospective Collection* (Washington, D.C.: Carrollton Press, 1976), 613C; Hughes, p. 25.

³² Wertheim, “Whose Plot?” p. 203; Mortimer, *Indonesian Communism*, p. 431 (Sjam); Sundhaussen, *The Road*, p. 228 (Suwanto and Sarwo Edhie).

³³ Joseph B. Smith, *Portrait of a Cold Warrior* (New York: Putnam, 1976), p. 205; cf. Thomas Powers, *The Man Who Kept the Secrets* (New York: Knopf, 1979), p. 89.

³⁴ U.S., Congress, Senate, Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, “Alleged Assassination Plots Involving Foreign Leaders,” 94th Cong., 1st Sess., 1975 (Senate Report No. 94-465), p. 4n; personal communications.

³⁵ *Declassified Documents Quarterly Catalogue*, 1982, 002386; 1981, 367A.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 1982, 002386 (JCS Memo for SecDef, 22 September 1958).

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documents at this time made reference.³⁷ It could only imply the tactics for which Nasution had distinguished himself (in American eyes) during the crushing of the PKI in the Madiun Affair of 1948: mass murders and mass arrests, at a minimum of the party's cadres, possibly after an army provocation.³⁸ Nasution confirmed this in November 1965, after the Gestapu slaughter, when he called for the total extinction of the PKI, "down to its very roots so there will be no third Madiun."³⁹

By 1958, however, the PKI had emerged as the largest mass movement in the country. It is in this period that a small group of U.S. academic researchers in U.S. Air Force- and CIA-subsidized "think-tanks" began pressuring their contacts in the Indonesian military publicly, often through U.S. scholarly journals and presses, to seize power and liquidate the PKI opposition.⁴⁰ The most prominent example is Guy Pauker, who in 1958 both taught at the University of California at Berkeley and served as a consultant at the RAND Corporation. In the latter capacity he maintained frequent contact with what he himself called "a very small group" of PSI intellectuals and their friends in the army.⁴¹

In a RAND Corporation book published by the Princeton University Press, Pauker urged his contacts in the Indonesian military to assume "full responsibility" for their nation's leadership, "fulfill a mission," and hence "to strike, sweep their house clean."⁴² Although Pauker may not have intended anything like the scale of bloodbath which eventually ensued, there is no escaping the fact that "mission" and "sweep clean" were buzz-words for counterinsurgency and massacre, and as such were used frequently before and during the coup. The first murder order, by

³⁷ *Indonesia*, 22 (October 1976), p. 164 (CIA Memorandum of 22 March 1961, Attachment A, p. 6).

³⁸ Scholars are divided over interpretations of Madiun as they are over Gestapu. Few Americans have endorsed the conclusion of Wertheim that "the so-called communist revolt of Madiun . . . was probably more or less provoked by anti-communist elements"; yet Kahin has suggested that the events leading to Madiun "may have been symptomatic of a general and widespread government drive aimed at cutting down the military strength of the PKI" (W.F. Wertheim, *Indonesian Society in Transition* [The Hague: W. van Hoeve, 1956], p. 82; George McT. Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia* [Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1970], p. 288). Cf. Southwood and Flanagan, *Indonesia: Law*, pp. 26–30.

³⁹ Southwood and Flanagan, *Indonesia: Law*, p. 68; cf. Nasution's statement to students on November 12, 1965, reprinted in *Indonesia*, 1 (April 1966), p. 183: "We are obliged and dutybound to wipe them [the PKI] from the soil of Indonesia."

⁴⁰ Examples in Peter Dale Scott, "Exporting Military-Economic Development," in Malcolm Caldwell, ed., *Ten Years' Military Terror in Indonesia* (Nottingham, England: Spokesman Books, 1975), pp. 227–32.

⁴¹ David Ransom, "Ford Country: Building an Elite for Indonesia," in Steve Weissman, ed., *The Trojan Horse* (San Francisco, California: Ramparts Press, 1974), p. 97; cf. p. 101. Pauker brought Suwanto to RAND in 1962.

⁴² John H. Johnson, ed., *The Role of the Military in Underdeveloped Countries* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1962), pp. 222–4. The foreword to the book is by Klaus Knorr, who worked for the CIA while teaching at Princeton.

military officers to Muslim students in early October, was the word *sikat*, meaning “sweep,” “clean out,” “wipe out,” or “massacre.”⁴³

Pauker’s closest friend in the Indonesian army was U.S.-trained General Suwanto, who played an important part in the conversion of the army from a revolutionary to a counterinsurgency function. In the years after 1958, Suwanto built the Indonesian Army Staff and Command School in Bandung (SESKOAD) into a training-ground for the takeover of political power. SESKOAD in this period became a focal point of attention from the Pentagon, the CIA, RAND, and (indirectly) the Ford Foundation.⁴⁴

Under the guidance of Nasution and Suwanto, SESKOAD developed a new strategic doctrine, that of Territorial Warfare (in a document translated into English by Pauker), which gave priority to counterinsurgency as the army’s role. Especially after 1962, when the Kennedy administration aided the Indonesian Army in developing Civic Mission or “civic action” programs, this meant the organization of its own political infrastructure, or “Territorial Organization,” reaching in some cases down to the village level.⁴⁵ As the result of an official U.S. State Department recommendation in 1962, which Pauker helped write, a special U.S. MILTAG (Military Training Advisory Group) was set up in Jakarta, to assist in the implementation of SESKOAD’s Civic Mission programs.⁴⁶

⁴³ Shaplen, *Time*, p. 118; Hughes, *The End*, p. 119; Southwood and Flanagan, *Indonesia: Law*, pp. 75–6; Scott, “Exporting,” p. 231. William Kintner, a CIA (OPC) senior staff officer from 1950–52, and later Nixon’s ambassador to Thailand, also wrote in favor of “liquidating” the PKI while working at a CIA-subsidized think-tank, the Foreign Policy Research Institute, on the University of Pennsylvania campus (William Kintner and Joseph Kornfeder, *The New Frontier of War* [London: Frederick Muller, 1963], pp. 233, 237–8): “If the PKI is able to maintain its legal existence and Soviet influence continues to grow, it is possible that Indonesia may be the first Southeast Asia country to be taken over by a popularly based, legally elected communist government In the meantime, with Western help, free Asian political leaders—together with the military—must not only hold on and manage, but reform and advance while liquidating the enemy’s political and guerrilla armies.”

⁴⁴ Ransom, “Ford Country,” pp. 95–103; Southwood and Flanagan, *Indonesia: Law*, pp. 34–6; Scott, “Exporting,” pp. 227–35.

⁴⁵ Sundhaussen, *The Road*, pp. 141, 175.

⁴⁶ Published U.S. accounts of the Civic Mission/“civic action” programs describe them as devoted to “civic projects—rehabilitating canals, draining swampland to create new rice paddies, building bridges and roads, and so on (Roger Hilsman, *To Move a Nation* [Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1967], p. 377). But a memo to President Johnson from Secretary of State Rusk, on July 17, 1964, makes it clear that at that time the chief importance of MILTAG was for its contact with anti-Communist elements in the Indonesian Army and its Territorial Organization: “Our aid to Indonesia . . . we are satisfied . . . is not helping Indonesia militarily. It is, however, permitting us to maintain some contact with key elements in Indonesia which are interested in and capable of resisting Communist takeover. We think this is of vital importance to the entire Free World” (*Declassified Documents Quarterly Catalogue*, 1982, 001786 [DOS Memo for President of July 17, 1964; italics in original]).

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SESKOAD also trained the army officers in economics and administration, and thus to operate virtually as a para-state, independent of Sukarno's government. So the army began to collaborate, and even sign contracts, with U.S. and other foreign corporations in areas which were now under its control. This training program was entrusted to officers and civilians close to the PSI.⁴⁷ U.S. officials have confirmed that the civilians, who themselves were in a training program funded by the Ford Foundation, became involved in what the (then) U.S. military attaché called "contingency planning" to prevent a PKI take-over.⁴⁸

But the most significant focus of U.S. training and aid was the Territorial Organization's increasing liaison with "the civilian administration, religious and cultural organizations, youth groups, veterans, trade unions, peasant organizations, political parties and groups at regional and local levels."⁴⁹ These political liaisons with civilian groups provided the structure for the ruthless suppression of the PKI in 1965, including the bloodbath.⁵⁰

Soon these army and civilian cadres were together plotting disruptive activities, such as the Bandung anti-Chinese riots of May 1963, which embarrassed not just the PKI, but Sukarno himself. Chomsky and Herman report that "Army-inspired anti-Chinese programs that took place in West Java in 1959 were financed by U.S. contributions to the local army commander"; apparently CIA funds were used by the commander (Colonel Kosasih) to pay local thugs in what Mozingo calls "the army's (and probably the Americans') campaign to rupture relations with China."⁵¹ The 1963 riot, which took place in the very shadow of SESKOAD, is linked by Sundhaussen to an army "civic action" organization; and shows conspiratorial contact between elements (an underground PSI cell, PSI- and Masjumi-affiliated student groups, and General Ishak Djuarsa of the Siliwangi Division's "civic action" organization) that would all be prominent in the very first phase of Suharto's

⁴⁷ Southwood and Flanagan, *Indonesia: Law*, p. 35; Scott, "Exporting," p. 233.

⁴⁸ Ransom, "Ford Country," pp. 101–2, quoting Willis G. Ethel; cited in Scott, "Exporting," p. 235.

⁴⁹ Sundhaussen, *The Road*, p. 141. There was also the army's "own securely controlled paramilitary organization of students—modelled on the U.S. R.O.T.C. and commanded by an army colonel [Djuhartono] fresh from the U.S. army intelligence course in Hawaii": Mrázek, *The United States*, vol. II, p. 139, citing interview of Nasution with George Kahin, July 8, 1963.

⁵⁰ Pauker, though modest in assessing his own political influence, does claim that a RAND paper he wrote on counterinsurgency and social justice, ignored by the U.S. military for whom it was intended, was influential in the development of his friend Suwarto's Civic Mission doctrine.

⁵¹ Noam Chomsky and E.S. Herman, *The Washington Connection and Third World Fascism* (Boston, Massachusetts: South End Press, 1979), p. 206; David Mozingo, *Chinese Policy Toward Indonesia* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1976), p. 178.

so-called "response" to Gestapu.⁵² The May 1963 student riots were repeated in October 1965 and (especially in Bandung) January 1966, at which time the liaison between students and the army was largely in the hands of PSI-leaning officers like Sarwo Edhie and Kemal Idris.⁵³ The CIA Plans Directorate was sympathetic to the increasing deflection of a nominally anti-PKI operation into one embarrassing Sukarno. This turn would have come as no surprise: Suwanto, Kemal Idris and the PSI had been prominent in a near-coup (the so-called "Lubis affair") in 1956.⁵⁴

But increasingly Suwanto cultivated a new student, Colonel Suharto, who arrived at SESKOAD in October 1959. According to Sundhaussen, a relatively pro-Suharto scholar: "In the early 1960s Soeharto was involved in the formation of the Doctrine of Territorial Warfare and the Army's policy on Civic Mission (that is, penetration of army officers into all fields of government activities and responsibilities)."⁵⁵ Central to the public image of Gestapu and Suharto's response is the much-publicized fact that Suharto, unlike his sometime teacher Suwanto, and his long-time chief of staff Achmad Wiranatakusuma, had never studied in the United States. But his involvement in Civic Mission (or what Americans called "civic action") programs located him along with PSI-leaning officers at the focal point of U.S. training activities in Indonesia, in a program which was nakedly political.⁵⁶

The refinement of Territorial Warfare and Civic Mission Doctrine into a new strategic doctrine for army political intervention became by 1965 the ideological process consolidating the army for political takeover. After Gestapu, when Suwanto was an important political advisor to his former SESKOAD pupil Suharto, his strategic doctrine was the

⁵² Sundhaussen, *The Road*, pp. 178–9. The PSI of course was neither monolithic nor a simple instrument of U.S. policy. But the real point is that, in this 1963 incident as in others, we see conspiratorial activity relevant to the military takeover, involving PSI and other individuals who were at the focus of U.S. training programs, and who would play an important role in 1965.

⁵³ Sundhaussen, *The Road*, pp. 228–33: in January 1966 the "PSI activists" in Bandung "knew exactly what they were aiming at, which was nothing less than the overthrow of Sukarno. Moreover, they had the protection of much of the Siliwangi officer corps." Once again, I use Sundhaussen's term "PSI-leaning" to denote a milieu, not to explain it. Sarwo Edhie was a long-time CIA contact, while Kemal Idris' role in 1965 may owe much to his former PETA commander the Japanese intelligence officer Yanagawa. Cf. Masashi Nishihara, *The Japanese and Sukarno's Indonesia* (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1976), pp. 138, 212.

⁵⁴ Sundhaussen, *The Road*, pp. 99–101. Lubis was also a leader in the November 1957 assassination attempt against Sukarno, and the 1958 rebellion.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 188; cf. p. 159n.

⁵⁶ Suharto's "student" status does not of course mean that he was a mere pawn in the hands of those with whom he established contact at SESKOAD. For example, Suharto's independence from the PSI and those close to them became quite evident in January 1974, when he and Ali Murtopo cracked down on these responsible for army-tolerated student riots reminiscent of the one in May 1963. Cf. Crouch, *The Army*, pp. 309–17.

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justification for Suharto's announcement on August 15, 1966, in fulfilment of Pauker's public and private urgings, that the army had to assume a leading role in all fields.⁵⁷

Hence the army unity meeting of January 1965, arranged after Suharto had duplicitously urged Nasution to take "a more accommodating line"⁵⁸ towards Sukarno, was in fact a necessary step in the process whereby Suharto effectively took over from his rivals Yani and Nasution. It led to the April 1965 seminar at SESKOAD for a compromise army strategic doctrine, the Tri Ubaya Cakti, which "reaffirmed the army's claim to an independent political role."⁵⁹ On August 15, 1966, Suharto, speaking to the nation, justified his increasing prominence in terms of the "Revolutionary Mission" of the Tri Ubaya Cakti doctrine. Two weeks later at SESKOAD the doctrine was revised, at Suharto's instigation but in a setting "carefully orchestrated by Brigadier Suwanto," to embody still more clearly Pauker's emphasis on the army's "Civic Mission" or counterrevolutionary role.⁶⁰ This "Civic Mission," so important to Suharto, was also the principal goal and fruit of U.S. military aid to Indonesia.

By August 1964, moreover, Suharto had initiated political contacts with Malaysia, and hence eventually with Japan, Britain, and the United States.⁶¹ Although the initial purpose of these contacts may have been to head off war with Malaysia, Sundhaussen suggests that Suharto's motive was his concern, buttressed in mid-1964 by a KOSTRAD intelligence report, about PKI political advances.⁶² Mrázek links the peace feelers to the withdrawal of "some of the best army units" back to Java in the summer of 1965.⁶³ These movements, together with earlier deployment of a politically insecure Diponegoro battalion in the other direction, can also be seen as preparations for the seizure of power.⁶⁴

⁵⁷ Sundhaussen, *The Road*, pp. 228, 241–43. In the same period SESKOAD was used for the political re-education of generals like Surjosumpeno, who, although anti-Communist, were guilty of loyalty to Sukarno (p. 238).

⁵⁸ Crouch, *The Army*, p. 80; at this time Suharto was already unhappy with Sukarno's "rising pro-communist policy" (Roeder, *The Smiling*, p. 9).

⁵⁹ Crouch, *The Army*, p. 81; cf. Mrázek, *The United States*, vol. II, pp. 149–51.

⁶⁰ Sundhaussen, *The Road*, pp. 241–3.

⁶¹ Through his intelligence group OPSUS (headed by Ali Murtopo) Suharto made contact with Malaysian leaders; in two accounts former PSI and PRRI/Permesta personnel in Malaysia played a role in setting up this sensitive political liaison: Crouch, *The Army*, p. 74; Nishihara, *The Japanese*, p. 149.

⁶² Sundhaussen, *The Road*, p. 188.

⁶³ Mrázek, *The United States*, vol. II, p. 152.

⁶⁴ Cf. Edward Luttwak, *Coup D'Etat: A Practical Handbook* (London: Allen Lane/Penguin Press, 1968), p. 61: "though Communist-infiltrated army units were very powerful they were in the wrong place; while they sat in the Borneo jungles the anti-Communist paratroops and marines took over Jakarta, and the country." What is most interesting in this informed account by Luttwak (who has worked for years with the CIA) is that "the anti-Communist paratroops" included not only the RPKAD but those who staged the Gestapu uprising in Jakarta, before putting it down.

In Nishihara's informed Japanese account, former PRRI/Permesta personnel with intelligence connections in Japan were prominent in these negotiations, along with Japanese officials.⁶⁵ Nishihara also heard that an intimate ally of these personnel, Jan Walandouw, who may have acted as a CIA contact for the 1958 rebellion, later again "visited Washington and advocated Suharto as a leader."⁶⁶ I am reliably informed that Walandouw's visit to Washington on behalf of Suharto was made some months before Gestapu.⁶⁷

THE U.S. MOVES AGAINST SUKARNO

Many people in Washington, especially in the CIA Plans Directorate, had long desired the "removal" of Sukarno as well as of the PKI.⁶⁸ By 1961 key policy hard-liners, notably Guy Pauker, had also turned against Nasution.⁶⁹ Nevertheless, despite last-minute memoranda from the outgoing Eisenhower administration which would have opposed "whatever regime" in Indonesia was "increasingly friendly toward the Sino-Soviet bloc," the Kennedy administration eventually stepped up aid to both Sukarno and the army.⁷⁰

However, Lyndon Johnson's accession to the presidency was followed almost immediately by a shift to a more anti-Sukarno policy. This

⁶⁵ Nishihara, *The Japanese*, pp. 142, 149.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 202, cf. p. 207. The PRRI/Permesta veterans engaged in the OPSUS peace feelers, Daan Mogot and Willy Pesik, had with Jan Walandouw been part of a 1958 PRRI secret mission to Japan, a mission detailed in the inside account by former CIA officer Joseph B. Smith (*Portrait of a Cold Warrior* [New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1976], p. 245), following which Walandouw flew on "to Taipeh, then Manila and New York."

⁶⁷ Personal communication. If the account of Neville Maxwell (senior research officer at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, Oxford University) can be believed, then the planning of the Gestapu/anti-Gestapu scenario may well have begun in 1964 (*Journal of Contemporary Asia*, IX, 2 [1979], pp. 251–2; reprinted in Southwood and Flanagan, *Indonesia: Law*, p. 13): "A few years ago I was researching in Pakistan into the diplomatic background of the 1965 Indo-Pakistan conflict, and in foreign ministry papers to which I had been given access came across a letter to the then foreign minister, Mr. Bhutto, from one of his ambassadors in Europe . . . reporting a conversation with a Dutch intelligence officer with NATO. According to my note of that letter, the officer had remarked to the Pakistani diplomat that 'Indonesia was going to fall into the Western lap like a rotten apple.' Western intelligence agencies, he said, would organize a 'premature communist coup . . . [which would be] foredoomed to fail, providing a legitimate and welcome opportunity to the army to crush the communists and make Soekarno a prisoner of the army's goodwill.' The ambassador's report was dated December 1964."

⁶⁸ *Indonesia*, 22 (October 1976), p. 164 (CIA Memo of March 27, 1961, Appendix A, p. 8); cf. Powers, *The Man*, p. 89.

⁶⁹ *Indonesia*, 22 (October 1976), p. 165 (CIA Memo of March 27, 1961).

⁷⁰ The lame-duck Eisenhower NSC memo would have committed the U.S. to oppose not just the PKI in Indonesia, but "a policy increasingly friendly toward the Sino-Soviet bloc on the part of whatever regime is in power." "The size and importance of Indonesia," it concluded, "dictate [!] a vigorous U.S. effort to prevent these contingencies": *Declassified Documents Quarterly Catalogue*, 1982, 000592 (NSC 6023 of 19 December, 1960). For other U.S. intrigues at this time to induce a more vigorous U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia, cf. *Declassified Documents Quarterly Catalogue*, 1983, 001285–86; Peter Dale Scott, *The War Conspiracy* (New York: Bobbs Merrill, 1972), pp. 12–14, 17–20.

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is clear from Johnson's decision in December 1963 to withhold economic aid which (according to Ambassador Jones) Kennedy would have supplied "almost as a matter of routine."⁷¹ This refusal suggests that the U.S. aggravation of Indonesia's economic woes in 1963–65 was a matter of policy rather than inadvertence. Indeed, if the CIA's overthrow of Allende is a relevant analogy, then one would expect someday to learn that the CIA, through currency speculations and other hostile acts, contributed actively to the radical destabilization of the Indonesian economy in the weeks just before the coup, when "the price of rice quadrupled between June 30 and October 1, and the black market price of the dollar skyrocketed, particularly in September."⁷²

As was the case in Chile, the gradual cutoff of all economic aid to Indonesia in the years 1962–65 was accompanied by a shift in military aid to friendly elements in the Indonesian Army: U.S. military aid amounted to \$39.5 million in the four years 1962–65 (with a peak of \$16.3 million in 1962) as opposed to \$28.3 million for the thirteen years 1949–61.⁷³ After March 1964, when Sukarno told the U.S., "go to hell with your aid," it became increasingly difficult to extract any aid from the U.S. Congress: those persons not aware of what was developing found it hard to understand why the U.S. should help arm a country which was nationalizing U.S. economic interests, and using immense aid subsidies from the Soviet Union to confront the British in Malaysia.

Thus a public image was created that under Johnson "all United States aid to Indonesia was stopped," a claim so buttressed by misleading documentation that competent scholars have repeated it.⁷⁴ In fact, Congress had agreed to treat U.S. funding of the Indonesian military (unlike aid to any other country) as a covert matter, restricting congressional review of the president's determinations on Indonesian aid to two Senate committees, and the House Speaker, who were concurrently involved in oversight of the CIA.⁷⁵

⁷¹ Jones, *Indonesia: The Possible Dream*, p. 299.

⁷² Mortimer, *Indonesian Communism*, pp. 385–6.

⁷³ U.S., Department of Defense, *Military Assistance Facts*, May 1, 1966. Before 1963 the existence as well as the amount of the MAP in Indonesia was withheld from the public; retroactively, figures were published. After 1962 the total deliveries of military aid declined dramatically, but were aimed more and more particularly at anti-PKI and anti-Sukarno plotters in the army; cf. fns. 46, 76 and 83.

⁷⁴ *The New York Times*, August 5, 1965, p. 3; cf. Nishihara, *The Japanese*, p. 149; Mrázek, vol. II, p. 121.

⁷⁵ A Senate amendment in 1964 to cut off all aid to Indonesia unconditionally was quietly killed in conference committee, on the misleading ground that the Foreign Assistance Act "requires the President to report fully and concurrently to both Houses of the Congress on any assistance furnished to Indonesia" (U.S. Cong., Senate, Report No. 88-1925, *Foreign Assistance Act of 1964*, p. 11). In fact the act's requirement that the president report "to Congress" applied to eighteen other countries, but in the case of Indonesia he was to report to two Senate committees and the *speaker* of the House: Foreign Assistance Act, Section 620(j).

Ambassador Jones' more candid account admits that "suspension" meant "the U.S. government undertook no new commitments of assistance, although it continued with ongoing programs By maintaining our modest assistance to [the Indonesian Army and the police brigade], we fortified them for a virtually inevitable showdown with the burgeoning PKI."⁷⁶

Only from recently released documents do we learn that new military aid was en route as late as July 1965, in the form of a secret contract to deliver two hundred Aero-Commanders to the Indonesian Army: these were light aircraft suitable for use in "civic action" or counterinsurgency operations, presumably by the Army Flying Corps whose senior officers were virtually all trained in the U.S.⁷⁷ By this time, the publicly admitted U.S. aid was virtually limited to the completion of an army communications system and to "civic action" training. It was by using the army's new communications system, rather than the civilian system in the hands of Sukarno loyalists, that Suharto on October 1, 1965 was able to implement his swift purge of Sukarno-Yani loyalists and leftists, while "civic action" officers formed the hard core of lower-level Gestapu officers in Central Java.⁷⁸

Before turning to the more covert aspects of U.S. military aid to Indonesia in 1963–65, let us review the overall changes in U.S.-Indonesian relations. Economic aid was now in abeyance, and military aid tightly channeled so as to strengthen the army domestically. U.S. government funding had obviously shifted from the Indonesian state to one of its least loyal components. As a result of agreements beginning with martial law in 1957, but accelerated by the U.S.-negotiated oil agreement of 1963, we see exactly the same shift in the flow of payments from U.S. oil companies. Instead of token royalties to the Sukarno government, the two big U.S. oil companies in Indonesia, Stanvac and Caltex, now made much larger payments to the army's oil company, Pertamina, headed by an eventual political ally of Suharto, General Ibnu Sutowo; and to a second company, Pertamina, headed by the anti-PKI and pro-U.S. politician, Chaerul Saleh.⁷⁹ After Suharto's overthrow of

⁷⁶ Jones, *Indonesia: The Possible Dream*, p. 324.

⁷⁷ U.S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Multinational Corporations and United States Foreign Policy, Hearings* (cited hereafter as Church Committee Hearings), 94th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1978, p. 941; Mrázek, *The United States*, vol. II, p. 22. Mrázek quotes Lt. Col. Juono of the corps as saying that "we are completely dependent on the assistance of the United States."

⁷⁸ Notosusanto and Saleh, *The Coup*, pp. 43, 46.

⁷⁹ Nishihara, *The Japanese* (pp. 171, 194, 202), shows the role in the 1965–66 anti-Sukarno conspiracy of the small faction (including Ibnu Sutowo, Adam Malik, and the influential Japanese oilman Nishijima) who interposed themselves as negotiators between the 1958 PRRI Rebellion and the central government. Alamsjah, mentioned below, was another member of this group; he joined Suharto's staff in 1960. For Murba and CIA, cf. fn. 104.

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Sukarno, *Fortune* wrote that “Sutowo’s still small company played a key part in bankrolling those crucial operations, and the army has never forgotten it.”⁸⁰

U.S. SUPPORT FOR THE SUHARTO FACTION BEFORE GESTAPU

American officials commenting on the role of U.S. aid in this period have taken credit for assisting the anti-Communist seizure of power, without ever hinting at any degree of conspiratorial responsibility in the planning of the bloodbath. The impression created is that U.S. officials remained aloof from the actual planning of events, and we can see from recently declassified cable traffic how carefully the U.S. government fostered this image of detachment from what was happening in Indonesia.⁸¹

In fact, however, the U.S. government was lying about its involvement. In Fiscal Year 1965, a period when *The New York Times* claimed “all United States aid to Indonesia was stopped,” the number of MAP (Military Assistance Program) personnel in Jakarta actually increased, beyond what had been projected, to an unprecedented high.⁸² According to figures released in 1966,⁸³ from FY 1963 to FY 1965 the value of MAP deliveries fell from about fourteen million dollars to just over two million dollars. Despite this decline, the number of MAP military personnel remained almost unchanged, approximately thirty, while in FY 1965 civilian personnel (fifteen) were present for the first time. Whether or not one doubts that aid deliveries fell off as sharply as the figures would suggest, the MILTAG personnel figures indicate that their “civic action” program was being escalated, not decreased.⁸⁴ We have seen that some months before Gestapu, a Suharto emissary with past CIA connections (Colonel Jan Walandouw) made contact with the U.S. government. From as early as May 1965, U.S. military suppliers with CIA connections (principally Lockheed) were negotiating equipment sales with payoffs to middlemen, in such a way as to generate

⁸⁰ *Fortune*, July 1973, p. 154, cf. *Wall Street Journal*, April 18, 1967; both in Scott, “Exporting,” pp. 239, 258.

⁸¹ *Declassified Documents Retrospective Collection*, 609A (Embassy Cable 1002 of October 14, 1965); 613A (Embassy Cable 1353 of November 7, 1965).

⁸² *The New York Times*, August 5, 1965, p. 3.

⁸³ U.S. Department of Defense, *Military Assistance Facts*, May 1, 1966. The thirty-two military personnel in FY 1965 represent an increase over the projected figure in March 1964 of twenty-nine. Most of them were apparently Green Beret U.S. Special Forces, whose forward base on Okinawa was visited in August 1965 by Gestapu Plotter Saherman. Cf. fn. 122.

⁸⁴ George Benson, an associate of Guy Pauker who headed the Military Training Advisory Group (MILTAG) in Jakarta, was later hired by Ibnu Sutowo to act as a lobbyist for the army’s oil company (renamed Pertamina) in Washington: *The New York Times*, December 6, 1981, p. 1.

payoffs to backers of the hitherto little-known leader of a new third faction in the army, Major-General Suharto—rather than to those backing Nasution or Yani, the titular leaders of the armed forces. Only in the last year has it been confirmed that secret funds administered by the U.S. Air Force (possibly on behalf of the CIA) were laundered as “commissions” on sales of Lockheed equipment and services, in order to make political payoffs to the military personnel of foreign countries.⁸⁵

A 1976 Senate investigation into these payoffs revealed, almost inadvertently, that in May 1965, over the legal objections of Lockheed’s counsel, Lockheed commissions in Indonesia had been redirected to a new contract and company set up by the firm’s long-time local agent or middleman.⁸⁶ Its internal memos at the time show no reasons for the change, but in a later memo the economic counselor of the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta is reported as saying that there were “some political considerations behind it.”⁸⁷ If this is true, it would suggest that in May 1965, five months before the coup, Lockheed had redirected its payoffs to a new political eminence, at the risk (as its assistant chief counsel pointed out) of being sued for default on its former contractual obligations.

The Indonesian middleman, August Munir Dasaad, was “known to have assisted Sukarno financially since the 1930’s.”⁸⁸ In 1965, however, Dasaad was building connections with the Suharto forces, via a family relative, General Alamsjah, who had served briefly under Suharto in 1960, after Suharto completed his term at SESKOAD. Via the new contract, Lockheed, Dasaad and Alamsjah were apparently hitching their wagons to Suharto’s rising star:

When the coup was made during which Suharto replaced Sukarno, Alamsjah, who controlled certain considerable funds, at once made these available to Suharto, which obviously earned him the gratitude of the new President. In due course he was appointed to a position of trust and confidence and today Alamsjah is, one might say, the second important man after the President.⁸⁹

Thus in 1966 the U.S. Embassy advised Lockheed it should “continue to use” the Dasaad-Alamsjah-Suharto connection.⁹⁰

⁸⁵ *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 24, 1983, p. 22, describes one such USAF-Lockheed operation in Southeast Asia, “code-named ‘Operation Buttercup’ that operated out of Norton Air Force Base in California from 1965 to 1972.” For the CIA’s close involvement in Lockheed payoffs, cf. Anthony Sampson, *The Arms Bazaar* (New York: Viking, 1977), pp. 137, 227–8, 238.

⁸⁶ Church Committee Hearings, pp. 943–51.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 960.

⁸⁸ Nishihara, *The Japanese*, p. 153.

⁸⁹ Lockheed Aircraft International, memo of Fred C. Meuser to Erle M. Constable, 19 July 1968, in Church Committee Hearings, p. 962.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 954; cf. p. 957. In 1968, when Alamsjah suffered a decline in power, Lockheed did away with the middleman and paid its agents’ fees directly to a group of military officers (pp. 342, 977).

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In July 1965, at the alleged nadir of U.S.-Indonesian aid relations, Rockwell-Standard had a contractual agreement to deliver two hundred light aircraft (Aero-Commanders) to the Indonesian Army (not the Air Force) in the next two months.⁹¹ Once again the commission agent on the deal, Bob Hasan, was a political associate (and eventual business partner) of Suharto.⁹² More specifically, Suharto and Bob Hasan established two shipping companies to be operated by the Central Java army division, Diponegoro. This division, as has long been noticed, supplied the bulk of the personnel on both sides of the Gestapu coup drama—both those staging the coup attempt, and those putting it down. And one of the three leaders in the Central Java Gestapu movement was Lt. Col. Usman Sastrodibroto, chief of the Diponegoro Division's "section dealing with extramilitary functions."⁹³

Thus of the two known U.S. military sales contracts from the eve of the Gestapu Putsch, both involved political payoffs to persons who emerged after Gestapu as close Suharto allies. The use of this traditional channel for CIA patronage suggests that the U.S. was not at arm's length from the ugly political developments of 1965, despite the public indications, from both government spokesmen and the U.S. business press, that Indonesia was now virtually lost to communism and nothing could be done about it.

The actions of some U.S. corporations, moreover, made it clear that by early 1965 they expected a significant boost to the U.S. standing in Indonesia. For example, a recently declassified cable reveals that Freeport Sulphur had by April 1965 reached a preliminary "arrangement" with Indonesian officials for what would become a \$500 million investment in West Papua copper. This gives the lie to the public claim that the company did not initiate negotiations with Indonesians (the inevitable Ibnu Sutowo) until February 1966.⁹⁴ And in September 1965, shortly after *World Oil* reported that "Indonesia's gas and oil industry appeared to be slipping deeper into the political morass,"⁹⁵ the president of a small oil company (Asamera) in a joint venture with Ibnu Sutowo's Permina purchased \$50,000 worth of shares in his own ostensibly-threatened company. Ironically this double purchase (on September 9 and September 21) was reported in the *Wall Street Journal* of September 30, 1965, the day of Gestapu.

⁹¹ Church Committee Hearings, p. 941; cf. p. 955.

⁹² Southwood and Flanagan, *Indonesia: Law*, p. 59.

⁹³ Crouch, *The Army*, p. 114.

⁹⁴ *Declassified Documents Quarterly Catalogue*, 1982, 002507 (Cable of April 15, 1965, from U.S. Delegation to U.N.); cf. Forbes Wilson, *The Conquest of Copper Mountain* (New York: Atheneum, 1981), pp. 153–5.

⁹⁵ *World Oil*, August 15, 1965, p. 209.

THE CIA'S "[ONE WORD DELETED] OPERATION" IN 1965

Less than a year after Gestapu and the bloodbath, James Reston wrote appreciatively about them as "A Gleam of Light in Asia":

Washington is being careful not to claim any credit for this change in the sixth most populous and one of the richest nations in the world, but this does not mean that Washington had nothing to do with it. There was a great deal more contact between the anti-Communist forces in that country and at least one very high official in Washington before and during the Indonesian massacre than is generally realized.⁹⁶

As for the CIA in 1965, we have the testimony of former CIA officer Ralph McGehee, curiously corroborated by the selective censorship of his former CIA employers:

Where the necessary circumstances or proofs are lacking to support U.S. intervention, the C.I.A. creates the appropriate situations or else invents them and disseminates its distortions worldwide via its media operations.

A prominent example would be Chile . . . Disturbed at the Chilean military's unwillingness to take action against Allende, the C.I.A. forged a document purporting to reveal a leftist plot to murder Chilean military leaders. The discovery of this "plot" was headlined in the media and Allende was deposed and murdered.

There is a similarity between events that precipitated the overthrow of Allende and what happened in Indonesia in 1965. Estimates of the number of deaths that occurred as a result of the latter C.I.A. [one word deleted] operation run from one-half million to more than one million people.⁹⁷

McGehee claims to have once seen, while reviewing CIA documents in Washington, a highly classified report on the agency's role in provoking the destruction of the PKI after Gestapu. It seems appropriate to ask for congressional review and publication of any such report. If, as is alleged, it recommended such murderous techniques as a model for future operations, it would appear to document a major turning-point in the agency's operational history: towards the systematic exploitation of the death squad operations which, absent during the Brazilian coup of 1964, made the Vietnam Phoenix counterinsurgency program notorious after

⁹⁶ *The New York Times*, June 19, 1966, IV, 4.

⁹⁷ Ralph McGehee, "The C.I.A. and the White Paper on El Salvador," *The Nation*, April 11, 1981, p. 423. The deleted word would appear from its context to be "deception." Cf. Roger Morris and Richard Mauzy, "Following the Scenario," in Robert L. Borosage and John Marks, eds., *The CIA File* (New York: Grossman/Viking, 1976), p. 39: "Thus the fear of Communist subversion, which erupted to a frenzy of killing in 1965-1966, had been encouraged in the 'penetration' propaganda of the Agency in Indonesia . . . 'All I know,' said one former intelligence officer of the Indonesia events, 'is that the Agency rolled in some of its top people and that things broke big and very favorable, as far as we were concerned.'"

All references to deletions appear in the original text as printed in *The Nation*. These bracketed portions, shown in this article in bold-face type, reflect censorship by the CIA.

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1967, and after 1968 spread from Guatemala to the rest of Latin America.⁹⁸

McGehee's claims of a CIA psychological warfare operation against Allende are corroborated by Tad Szulc:

CIA agents in Santiago assisted Chilean military intelligence in drafting bogus Z-plan documents alleging that Allende and his supporters were planning to behead Chilean military commanders. These were issued by the junta to justify the coup.⁹⁹

Indeed the CIA deception operations against Allende appear to have gone even farther, terrifying both the left and the right with the fear of incipient slaughter by their enemies. Thus militant trade-unionists as well as conservative generals in Chile received small cards printed with the ominous words *Djakarta se acerca* (Jakarta is approaching).¹⁰⁰

This is a model destabilization plan—to persuade all concerned that they no longer can hope to be protected by the status quo, and hence weaken the center, while inducing both right and left towards more violent provocation of each other. Such a plan appears to have been followed in Laos in 1959–61, where a CIA officer explained to a reporter that the aim “was to polarize Laos.”¹⁰¹ It appears to have been followed in Indonesia in 1965. Observers like Sundhaussen confirm that to understand the coup story of October 1965 we must look first of all at the “rumour market” which in 1965 . . . turned out the wildest stories.¹⁰² On September 14, two weeks before the coup, the army was warned that there was a plot to assassinate army leaders four days later; a second such report was discussed at army headquarters on September 30.¹⁰³ But a year earlier an alleged PKI document, which the PKI denounced as a forgery, had purported to describe a plan to overthrow

⁹⁸ Victor Marchetti and John Marx, *The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence* (New York: Knopf, 1974), p. 245. For a list of twenty-five U.S. operatives transferred from Vietnam to Guatemala in the 1964–73 period, cf. Susanne Jonas and David Tobis, *Guatemala* (Berkeley, California, and New York: North American Congress on Latin America, 1974), p. 201.

⁹⁹ Tad Szulc, *The Illusion of Peace* (New York: Viking, 1978), p. 724. The top CIA operative in charge of the 1970 anti-Allende operation, Sam Halpern, had previously served as chief executive officer on the CIA's anti-Sukarno operation of 1957–58: Seymour Hersh, *The Price of Power* (New York: Summit Books, 1983), p. 277; Powers, *The Man*, p. 91.

¹⁰⁰ Donald Freed and Fred Simon Landis, *Death in Washington* (Westport, Connecticut: Lawrence Hill, 1980), pp. 104–5.

¹⁰¹ *Time*, March 17, 1961.

¹⁰² Sundhaussen, *The Road*, p. 195.

¹⁰³ Jones, *Indonesia: The Possible Dream*, p. 374; Justus M. van der Kroef, “Origins of the 1965 Coup in Indonesia: Probabilities and Alternatives,” *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, III, 2 (September 1972), p. 282. Three generals were alleged targeted in the first report (Suharto, Mursjid, and Sukendro); all survived Gestapu.

“Nasutionists” through infiltration of the army. This “document,” which was reported in a Malaysian newspaper after being publicized by the pro-U.S. politician Chaerul Saleh¹⁰⁴ in mid-December 1964, must have lent credence to Suharto’s call for an army unity meeting the next month.¹⁰⁵

The army’s anxiety was increased by rumors, throughout 1965, that mainland China was smuggling arms to the PKI for an imminent revolt. Two weeks before Gestapu, a story to this effect also appeared in a Malaysian newspaper, citing Bangkok sources which relied in turn on Hong Kong sources.¹⁰⁶ Such international untraceability is the stylistic hallmark of stories emanating in this period from what CIA insiders called their “mighty Wurlitzer,” the world-wide network of press “assets” through which the CIA, or sister agencies such as Britain’s MI-6, could plant unattributable disinformation.¹⁰⁷ PKI demands for a popular militia or “fifth force,” and the training of PKI youth at Lubang Buaja, seemed much more sinister to the Indonesian army in the light of the Chinese arms stories.

But for months before the coup, the paranoia of the PKI had also been played on, by recurring reports that a CIA-backed “Council of Generals” was plotting to suppress the PKI. It was this mythical council, of course, that Untung announced as the target of his allegedly anti-CIA Gestapu coup. But such rumors did not just originate from anti-American sources; on the contrary, the first authoritative published reference to such a council was in a column of the Washington journalists Evans and Novak:

As far back as March, General Ibrahim Adjie, commander of the Siliwangi Division, had been quoted by two American journalists as saying of the Communists: “we knocked them out before [at Madiun]. We check them and check them again.” The same journalists claimed to have information that “. . . the Army has quietly established an advisory commission of five general

¹⁰⁴ Chaerul Saleh’s Murba Party, including the pro-U.S. Adam Malik, was also promoting the anti-Communist “Body to Support Sukarnoism” (BPS), which was banned by Sukarno on December 17, 1964. (Subandrio “is reported to have supplied Sukarno with information purporting to show U.S. Central Intelligence Agency influence behind the BPS” [Mortimer, p. 377]; it clearly did have support from the CIA- and army-backed labor organization SOKSI.) Shortly afterwards, Murba itself was banned, and promptly “became active as a disseminator of rumours and unrest” (Holtzappel, p. 238).

¹⁰⁵ Sundhaussen, *The Road*, p. 183; Mortimer, *Indonesian Communism*, pp. 376-77; *Singapore Straits Times*, December 24, 1964; quoted in Van der Kroef, “Origins,” p. 283.

¹⁰⁶ *Sabah Times*, September 14, 1965; quoted in Van der Kroef, “Origins,” p. 296. Mazingo, *Chinese Policy* (p. 242) dismisses charges such as these with a contemptuous footnote.

¹⁰⁷ Powers, *The Man*, p. 80; cf. Senate Report No. 94-755, *Foreign and Military Intelligence*, p. 192. CIA-sponsored channels also disseminated the Chinese arms story at this time inside the United States—e.g., Brian Crozier, “Indonesia’s Civil War,” *New Leader*, November 1965, p. 4.

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officers to report to General Jani . . . and General Nasution . . . on PKI activities.”¹⁰⁸

Mortimer sees the coincidence that five generals besides Yani were killed by Gestapu as being possibly significant.

But we should also be struck by the revival in the United States of the image of Yani and Nasution as anti-PKI planners, long after the CIA and U.S. press stories had in fact written them off as unwilling to act against Sukarno.¹⁰⁹ If the elimination by Gestapu of Suharto’s political competitors in the army was to be blamed on the left, then the scenario required just such a revival of the generals’ forgotten anti-Communist image in opposition to Sukarno. An anomalous unsigned August 1965 profile of Nasution in *The New York Times*, based on an 1963 interview but published only after a verbal attack by Nasution on British bases in Singapore, does just this: it claims (quite incongruously, given the context) that Nasution is “considered the strongest opponent of Communism in Indonesia”; and adds that Sukarno, backed by the PKI, “has been pursuing a campaign to neutralize the . . . army as an anti-Communist force.”¹¹⁰

In the same month of August 1965, fear of an imminent showdown between “the PKI and the Nasution group” was fomented in Indonesia by an underground pamphlet; this was distributed by the CIA’s long-time asset, the PSI, whose cadres were by now deeply involved:

The PKI is combat ready. The Nasution group hope the PKI will be the first to draw the trigger, but this the PKI will not do. The PKI will not allow itself to be provoked as in the Madiun Incident. In the end, however, there will be only two forces left: the PKI and the Nasution group. The middle will have no alternative but to choose and get protection from the stronger force.¹¹¹

One could hardly hope to find a better epitome of the propaganda necessary for the CIA’s program of engineering paranoia.

McGehee’s article, after censorship by the CIA, focusses more narrowly on the CIA’s role in anti-PKI propaganda alone:

The Agency seized upon this opportunity [Suharto’s response to Gestapu] and

¹⁰⁸ Mortimer, *Indonesian Communism*, p. 386. The Evans and Novak column coincided with the surfacing of the so-called “Gilchrist letter,” in which the British ambassador purportedly wrote about a U.S.-U.K. anti-Sukarno plot to be executed “together with local army friends.” All accounts agree that the letter was a forgery. However it distracted attention from a more incriminating letter from Ambassador Gilchrist, which Sukarno had discussed with Lyndon Johnson’s envoy Michael Forrestal in mid-February 1965, and whose authenticity Forrestal (who knew of the letter) did not deny (*Declassified Documents Retrospective Collection*, 594H [Embassy Cable 1583 of February 13, 1965]).

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Denis Warner, *Reporter*, March 28, 1963, pp. 62–63: “Yet with General A.H. Nasution, the defense minister, and General Jani, the army chief of staff, now out-Sukarnoing Sukarno in the dispute with Malaya over Malaysia . . . Mr. Brackman and all other serious students of Indonesia must be troubled by the growing irresponsibility of the army leadership.”

¹¹⁰ *The New York Times*, August 12, 1965, p. 2.

¹¹¹ Brackman, *The Communist*, p. 40.

set out to destroy the P.K.I. . . . [eight sentences deleted] Media fabrications played a key role in stirring up popular resentment against the P.K.I. Photographs of the bodies of the dead generals—badly decomposed—were featured in all the newspapers and on television. Stories accompanying the pictures falsely claimed that the generals had been castrated and their eyes gouged out by Communist women. This cynically manufactured campaign was designed to foment public anger against the Communists and set the stage for a massacre.¹¹²

McGehee might have added that the propaganda stories of torture by hysterical women with razor blades, which serious scholars dismiss as groundless, were revived in a more sophisticated version by a U.S. journalist, John Hughes, who is now the chief spokesman for the State Department.¹¹³

Suharto's forces, particularly Col. Sarwo Edhie of the RPKAD commandos, were overtly involved in the cynical exploitation of the victims' bodies.¹¹⁴ But some aspects of the massive propaganda campaign appear to have been orchestrated by non-Indonesians. A case in point is the disputed editorial in support of Gestapu which appeared in the October 2 issue of the PKI newspaper *Harian Rakjat*. Professors Benedict Anderson and Ruth McVey, who have questioned the authenticity of this issue, have also ruled out the possibility that the newspaper was "an Army falsification," on the grounds that the army's "competence . . . at falsifying party documents has always been abysmally low."¹¹⁵

The questions raised by Anderson and McVey have not yet been adequately answered. Why did the PKI show no support for the Gestapu coup while it was in progress, then rashly editorialize in support of Gestapu after it had been crushed? Why did the PKI, whose editorial gave support to Gestapu, fail to mobilize its followers to act on Gestapu's behalf? Why did Suharto, by then in control of Jakarta, close down all newspapers except this one, and one other left-leaning newspaper which also served his propaganda ends?¹¹⁶ Why, in other words, did Suharto on October 2 allow the publication of only two Jakarta newspapers, two which were on the point of being closed down forever?

As was stated at the outset, it would be foolish to suggest that in 1965 the only violence came from the U.S. government, the Indonesian

¹¹² McGehee, "The C.I.A.," p. 423.

¹¹³ Hughes, *The End*, pp. 43–50; cf. Crouch, *The Army*, p. 140n: "No evidence supports these stories."

¹¹⁴ Hughes, *The End*, p. 150, also tells how Sarwo Edhie exploited the corpse of Colonel Katamso as a pretext for provoking a massacre of the PKI in Central Java; cf. Crouch, p. 154n; also fn. 6.

¹¹⁵ Anderson and McVey, *A Preliminary*, p. 133.

¹¹⁶ Benedict Anderson and Ruth McVey, "What Happened in Indonesia?" *New York Review of Books*, June 1, 1978, p. 41; personal communication from Anderson. A second newspaper, *Suluh Indonesia*, told its PNI readers that the PNI did not support Gestapu, and thus served to neutralize potential opposition to Suharto's seizure of power.

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military, and their mutual contacts in British and Japanese intelligence. A longer paper could also discuss the provocative actions of the PKI, and of Sukarno himself, in this tragedy of social breakdown. Assuredly, from one point of view, no one was securely in control of events in this troubled period.¹¹⁷

And yet for two reasons such a fashionably objective summation of events seems inappropriate. In the first place, as the CIA's own study concedes, we are talking about "one of the ghastliest and most concentrated bloodlettings of current times," one whose scale of violence seems out of all proportion to such well-publicized left-wing acts as the murder of an army lieutenant at the Bandar Betsy plantation in May 1965.¹¹⁸ And, in the second place, the scenario described by McGehee for 1965 can be seen as not merely responding to the provocations, paranoia, and sheer noise of events in that year, but as actively encouraging and channeling them.

It should be noted that former CIA Director William Colby has repeatedly denied that there was CIA or other U.S. involvement in the massacre of 1965. (In the absence of a special CIA Task Force, Colby, as head of the CIA's Far Eastern Division from 1962–66, would normally have been responsible for the CIA's operations in Indonesia.) Colby's denial is however linked to the discredited story of a PKI plot to seize political power, a story that he revived in 1978:

Indonesia exploded, with a bid for power by the largest Communist Party in the world outside the curtain, which killed the leadership of the army with Sukarno's tacit approval and then was decimated in reprisal. CIA provided a steady flow of reports on the process in Indonesia, although it did not have any role in the course of events themselves.¹¹⁹

It is important to resolve the issue of U.S. involvement in this systematic murder operation, and particularly to learn more about the CIA account of this which McGehee claims to have seen. McGehee tells us: "The Agency was extremely proud of its successful [**one word deleted**] and recommended it as a model for future operations [**one-half sentence deleted**]."¹²⁰ Ambassador Green reports of an interview with Nixon in 1967:

The Indonesian experience had been one of particular interest to [Nixon]

¹¹⁷ Thus defenders of the U.S. role in this period might point out that where "civic action" had been most deeply implanted, in West Java, the number of civilians murdered was relatively (!) small; and that the most indiscriminate slaughter occurred where civic action programs had been only recently introduced. This does not, in my view, diminish the U.S. share of responsibility for the slaughter.

¹¹⁸ *CIA Study*, p. 70; Sundhaussen, *The Road*, p. 185.

¹¹⁹ William Colby, *Honorable Men: My Life in the CIA* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978), p. 227. Crouch, *The Army* (p. 108), finds no suggestion in the Mahmilub evidence "that the PKI aimed at taking over the government," only that it hoped to protect itself from the Council of Generals.

¹²⁰ McGehee, "The C.I.A.," p. 424.

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because things had gone well in Indonesia. I think he was very interested in that whole experience as pointing to the way we [!] should handle our relationships on a wider basis in Southeast Asia generally, and maybe in the world.¹²¹

Such unchallenged assessments help explain the role of Indonesians in the Nixon-sponsored overthrow of Sihanouk in Cambodia in 1970, the use of the Jakarta scenario for the overthrow of Allende in Chile in 1973, and the U.S. sponsorship today of the death squad regimes in Central America.¹²²

University of California, Berkeley, U.S.A., December 1984

¹²¹ Szulc, *The Illusion*, p. 16.

¹²² Southwood and Flanagan, *Indonesia: Law*, pp. 38–9 (Cambodia). According to a former U.S. Navy intelligence specialist, the initial U.S. military plan to overthrow Sihanouk “included a request for authorization to insert a U.S.-trained assassination team disguised as Vietcong insurgents into Phnom Penh to kill Prince Sihanouk as a pretext for revolution” (Hersh, *The Price*, p.179). Allegedly it was Lon Nol, the “Cambodian Suharto,” who vetoed the assassination proposal. As Hersh points out, Green Beret assassination teams that operated inside South Vietnam routinely dressed as Vietcong cadre while on missions. Thus the alleged U.S. plan of 1968, which was reportedly approved “shortly after Nixon’s inauguration . . . ‘at the highest level of government,’” called for an assassination of a moderate at the center by apparent leftists, as a pretext for a right-wing seizure of power. This raises an interesting question, albeit outlandish: did the earlier anti-Sukarno operation call for foreign elements to be infiltrated into the Gestapu forces murdering the generals? Holtzappel (“The 30 September,” p. 222) has suspected “the use of outsiders who are given suitable disguises to do a dirty job.” He points to trial witnesses from Untung’s battalion and the murder team who “declared under oath not to have known . . . their battalion commander.” Though these witnesses themselves would not have been foreigners, foreigners could have infiltrated more easily into their ranks than into a regular battalion.